

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all those who remain dedicated to advancing the goals of the APA community. I commend all of the APA organizations across America for enhancing the voice of APAs in the political and social arena. Their tireless efforts inspire others to achieve their dreams. All Americans, regardless of their ethnic background and heritage, benefit from their work.

This year, many organizations are choosing to celebrate Asian Pacific American Heritage Month by focusing on theme, "Unity in Freedom." This theme resonates deeply in the wake of September 11th. Following the attacks, the APA community has been a leading voice in the fight to protect the civil liberties of all Americans, regardless of race, ethnicity, or religion. This deep and enduring commitment is a testament to the remarkable resilience of APAs throughout American history.

It is quite fitting that our great nation takes the time each year to honor the exemplary contributions of APAs. This month allows us a moment to reflect on the past successes and struggles of the APA community, as well as the promise the future holds. As we examine and celebrate the distinct heritage of Asian Pacific Americans, it is important to acknowledge that the diverse fabric of our nation is bound together by a shared set of values: freedom, liberty, and equal opportunity. The APA community has long exemplified these values. It is an honor to highlight Asian Pacific American Heritage Month on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives.

ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

HON. DAVID WU

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 23, 2002

Mr. WU. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Asian Pacific American Heritage Month. In 1992, President George H.W. Bush signed into law legislation that designated May as Asian Pacific American Heritage Month to recognize and celebrate the contributions of Asian Pacific Americans to our nation. From the building of the transcontinental railroad to the development of the Internet, APAs have played an active and profound role in the development of our country.

Asian Pacific Americans have helped to make tremendous advances in politics, medicine, technology, business, music, literature, film, athletics, and countless other fields. APAs have also honorably served to defend the United States in times of armed conflict, from the Civil War to today. As Chair of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus, I am proud to recognize these achievements.

While many APAs are thriving, we must not forget those who are struggling to overcome obstacles, including language and cultural barriers as well as discrimination.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot stress enough the importance of improving data collection on Asian Pacific Americans. The tremendous diversity within the APA community poses challenges. Most data collections tend to lump various Asian Pacific Americans together in a single category, swallowing up numbers for each distinct group and failing to present an accurate

picture of subgroups. It is important that we recognize the distinct cultures, traditions and histories that make up the Asian Pacific American community.

America draws its strength from its tremendous diversity. APAs are one of the fastest growing populations with over 11.9 million people. We have greatly enriched the American landscape. I am honored to take part in Asian Pacific American Heritage Month by celebrating the many achievements of APAs in American history.

MEMORIAL DAY 2002

HON. STENY H. HOYER

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 23, 2002

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute in advance of this Monday's Memorial Day celebrations to the brave men and women who have sacrificed their lives while serving our country in the armed services. Memorial Day, originally founded as Decoration Day in 1868, is the one day a year that all Americans pay their respects to those killed in war.

The day's rituals are rooted in the tradition established by family members and friends who gathered in cemeteries to adorn the grave sites of loved ones who had died in battle with flowers, ribbon, and memorabilia. Today, we continue that tradition and gather as a country at important places of remembrance, such as Arlington National Cemetery or the World War II Normandy American Cemetery and Memorial in France, to demonstrate our appreciation and acknowledge the sacrifice of those who lost their lives in our perpetual fight to maintain our freedom and sovereignty.

This unique holiday is a time to reflect on what those who have died sacrificed on our behalf and give tribute to their selfless spirit. On November 11th, we laud our veterans for their bravery and dedication to duty. We hail our Independence on the 4th of July. On Thanksgiving Day, we give thanks for all that we have. The last Monday in May, however, is set aside to mourn those who died on the battlefield defending our Constitution, our country and our way of life—although we should certainly not confine our recognition to this one day.

We see this recognition and appreciation carried out in acts around the country, such as that of the 1,200 soldiers of the 3rd U.S. Infantry who place small American flags at each of the more than 260,000 gravestones at Arlington National Cemetery and patrol the Cemetery without cessation throughout the weekend to ensure each flag remains standing; or that of the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts who place a candle at each of the approximately 15,300 grave sites of soldiers buried at Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park on Marye's Heights.

Throughout the country, our landscape is embedded with powerful symbols and monuments that reflect our heritage. These symbols strive to keep us aware of all of those who have come before us. In our busy lives however, we often take our veterans and war heroes for granted. But I believe most Americans would agree that their valiant efforts should al-

ways be at the forefront of our collective memory and we should be careful to observe this important day to honor our fallen countrymen.

September 11th emphasized the importance of words like liberty, freedom and justice. We lost a tremendous number of men and women through an act of cowardice that caught us off-guard. And as so many had done before them, our nation's service men and women responded to our nation's call in the wake of that attack with fervor.

In Congress, we are working to support our troops abroad and strengthen America at home. The Department of Defense Authorization bill that recently passed the House of Representatives authorized over \$7 billion to combat terrorism and weapons of mass destruction. The bill also included pay raises of 4.1 percent or more for military personnel, over \$10 billion for military construction and family housing projects, and extended pay for certain reservists.

It also mends a disparity for military retirees who have not been able to receive their retiree pay as well as their disability pay. This bill will help improve our defensive readiness and improve the quality of life for all our active duty and veteran service men and women.

The fallen heroes who acted selflessly throughout our history in the face of tyranny and oppression fought a foe that we are still fighting to this very day. President John F. Kennedy once said, "A man does what he must—in spite of personal consequences, in spite of obstacles and dangers—and this is the basis of all human morality." All American's can learn from the bravery and courage of our lost soldiers. I urge my Colleagues to take a moment this Memorial Day and appreciate the freedom we have by remembering our fallen heroes.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO WORKERS IN NEW YORK CITY FOR RESCUE, RECOVERY, AND CLEAN-UP EF- FORTS AT SITE OF WORLD TRADE CENTER

SPEECH OF

HON. BENJAMIN A. GILMAN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 21, 2002

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of the measure introduced by my friend and colleague from New York, The Gentleman from ? Mr. FOSSELLAI, recognizing the heroic efforts of the hundreds of men and women who served in the rescue, recovery, and clean-up operations over the past eight months at ground zero in Manhattan.

On that horrible day in September, our nation witnessed the best and the worst of humanity. The despicable, cowardly, barbaric terrorist acts were valiantly countered with the incredible heroism and courage of our firefighters, law enforcement officers, emergency personnel, and our fellow citizens.

In the hours, days, and months following the attacks, these first responders were joined by steel workers, electricians, construction workers, and a myriad of specialists in the clean-up operation. Their collective and sustained effort has resulted in the successful near-completion of the massive clean-up operation.